Connecting Education and Workforce Data: RI's Statewide Longitudinal Data System

Board of Education

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Summary

- Rhode Island has a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) that connects individual-level data from early childhood, through postsecondary education, and into the workforce.

- This system, operated and maintained by DataSpark at URI, is one of the most robust and mature SLDSs in the country. It's a powerful tool to help policymakers make data-driven decisions.

- All three agencies (RIDE, OPC, and DLT) participating in the RI SLDS are working together on a bill to institutionalize the system in statute and create structures for its long-term sustainability and growth.

What is a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS)?

The US Dept of Education's Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program helps states and territories make informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes by designing, building, maintaining, and expanding P-20W+ (early childhood through workforce) longitudinal data systems.

- The SLDS Program was established by the Education Technical Assistance Act of 2002

- A total of 135 grants have been awarded since the first grant round in 2005

55 state and territory grantees

$826 million in total grants awarded

Number of SLDS grants received

- 4+
- 3
- 2
- 1
- 0

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Overview of Rhode Island's SLDS

Between the SLDS and U.S. Department of Labor's parallel Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant program, Rhode Island has received 6 rounds of federal grant funding, totaling $16.7 million.

DataSpark maintains and operates Rhode Island's statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS). For **nearly 30 years**, DataSpark has used the power of data to inform, empower, and inspire innovative decision making and research. The RI SLDS links previously siloed data using a proprietary **machine learning algorithm**, custom-built by DataSpark.
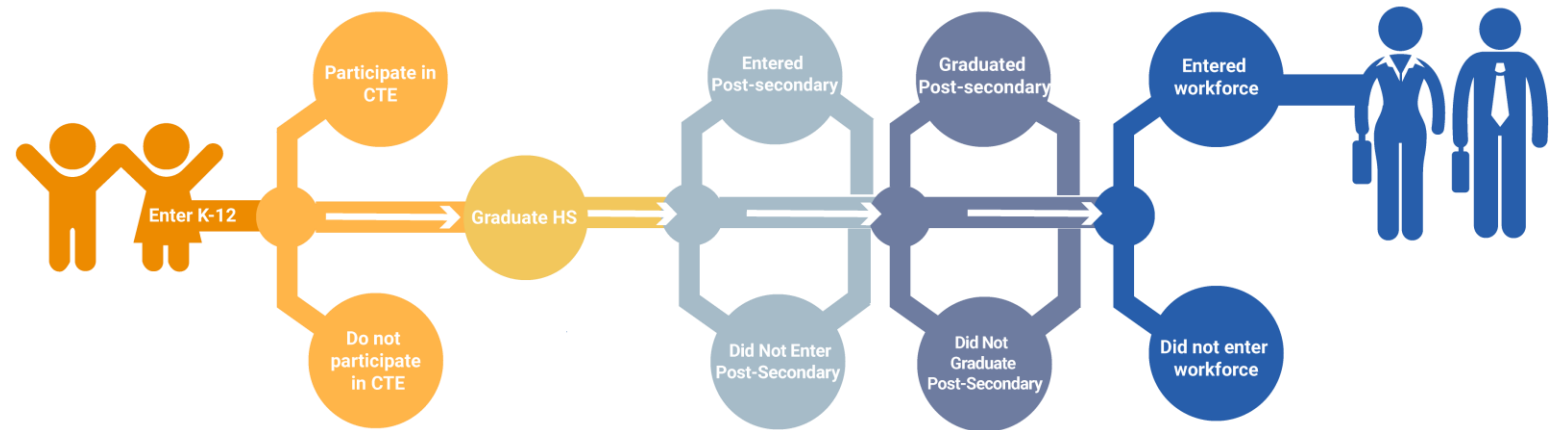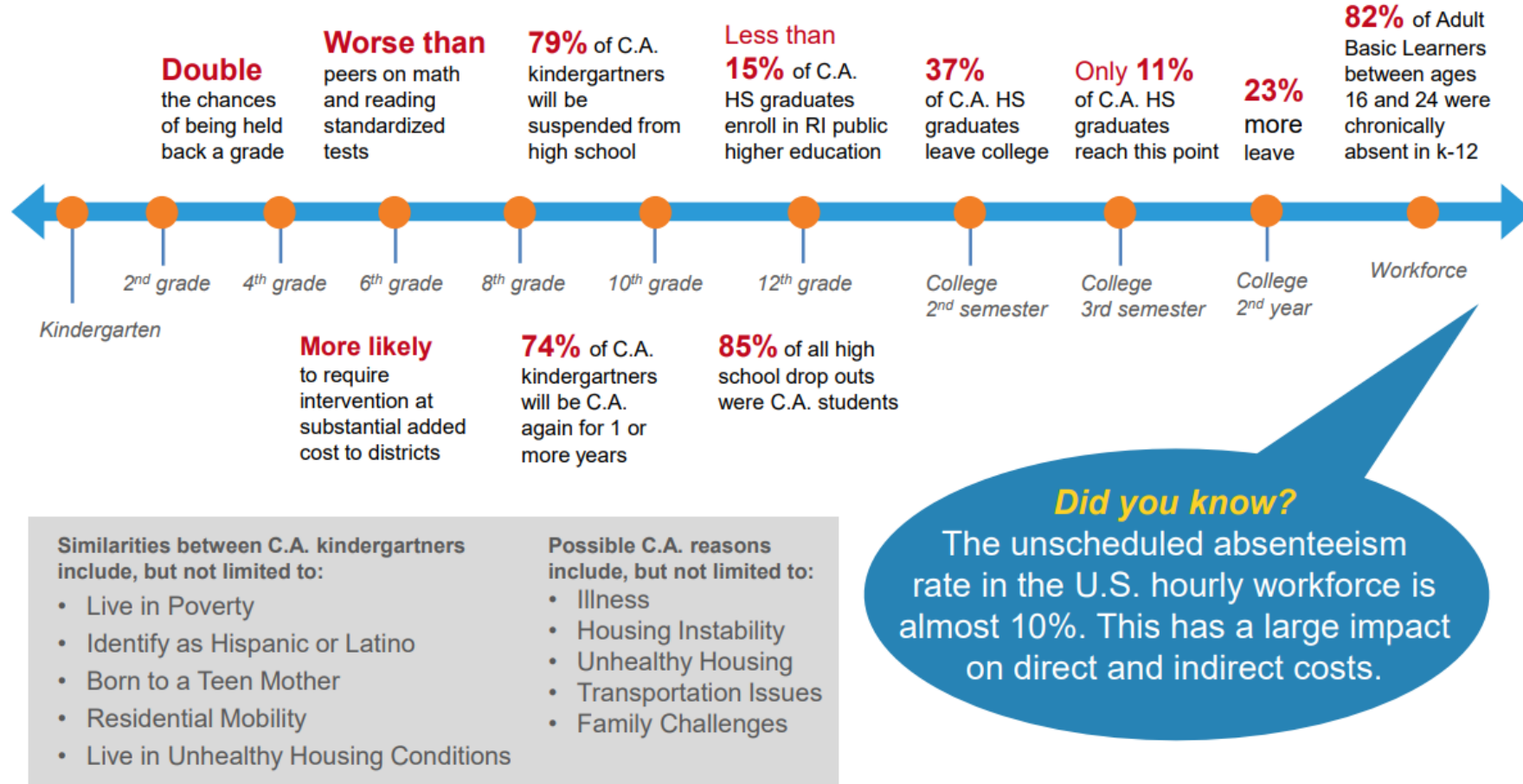
The Importance of a Sustained, Stable SLDS

Linking across agencies allows new information and patterns to emerge, cross-agency collaboration to evolve, and new insights to be discovered.

The RI SLDS is a state resource, supporting the state's policy and decision-making priorities. DataSpark leverages the RI SLDS to answer policy questions and support research around education and workforce outcomes, evaluate programs and measure investments in education and workforce development, and improve the lives of Rhode Islanders.

BENEFITS

Fosters cross-sector problem solving

Drives accountability & investment decisions

Improves decision making & research

Supports federal & state reporting

Improves organizational capacity & efficiency

Enhances data quality & usability

Increases data transparency & accessibility

Chronic Absenteeism:
Intervention and Prevention

Chronically Absent (C.A.) = missed 18 or more days of school

Double the chances of being held back a grade

Worse than peers on math and reading standardized tests

79% of C.A. kindergartners will be suspended from high school

Less than 15% of C.A. HS graduates enroll in RI public higher education

37% of C.A. HS graduates leave college

Only 11% of C.A. HS graduates reach this point

23% more leave

82% of Adult Basic Learners between ages 16 and 24 were chronically absent in k-12

Kindergarten | 2nd grade | 4th grade | 6th grade | 8th grade | 10th grade | 12th grade | College 2nd semester | College 3rd semester | College 2nd year | Workforce

More likely to require intervention at substantial added cost to districts

74% of C.A. kindergartners will be C.A. again for 1 or more years

85% of all high school drop outs were C.A. students

Similarities between C.A. kindergartners include, but not limited to:
- Live in Poverty
- Identify as Hispanic or Latino
- Born to a Teen Mother
- Residential Mobility
- Live in Unhealthy Housing Conditions

Possible C.A. reasons include, but not limited to:
- Illness
- Housing Instability
- Unhealthy Housing
- Transportation Issues
- Family Challenges

Did you know?
The unscheduled absenteeism rate in the U.S. hourly workforce is almost 10%. This has a large impact on direct and indirect costs.

Where do they go?
Documenting an educational "brain drain"

Of the students who enrolled in postsecondary education, more than one-third (37%) of Level 3 students and nearly two-thirds (63%) of Level 4 students attended out-of-state institutions.

11th Grade NECAP Level

CCRI RIC URI In-state Private Out-of-state (Public or Private)
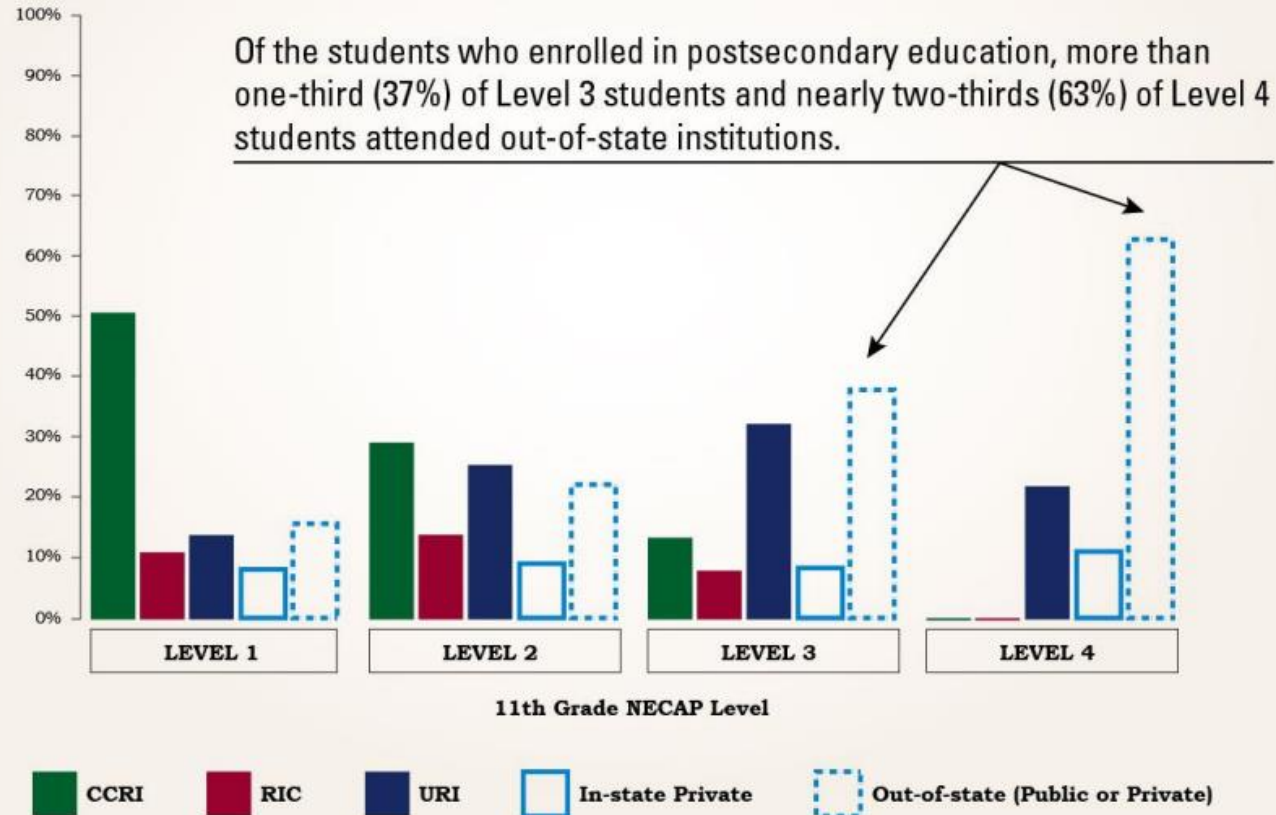
The RI SLDS of Today

DataSparks exists to foster the use of integrated, longitudinal data for research, evaluation and cross-sector problem solving.

- What are the annual wages of Career & Technical Education (CTE) participants after graduating from high school?

- Do teen mothers enroll in and then graduate from college?

- Does Rhode Island retain the health care graduates our public, postsecondary institutions train?

- How does lead exposure impact the need for special education services?

- Which industry-recognized credentials offer its participants the highest return on investment?

- Graduates from which majors are most likely to find employment out-of-state?

Median Annual Income of Workforce Training Completers, 2018

$12,491 — Less than High School
$24,656 — High School Graduate
$26,778 — Some College or Associate's Degree
$36,112 — Bachelor's Degree or Higher
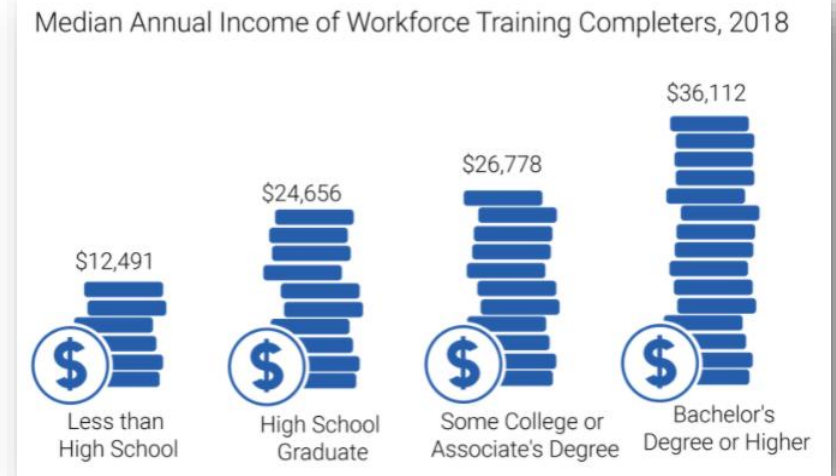
The RI SLDS of Tomorrow

The RI SLDS can inform policymaking and support program evaluation related to career pathways, economic opportunities, healthcare access, housing stability, and more.

- All three pipeline agencies (RIDE, OPC, and DLT) and DataSpark have established an interagency data sharing agreement, naming DataSpark as the authorized representative and research partner of the State's education and workforce agencies, as required per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other federal and state laws.

- To maximize benefits to the State, they have drafted legislation codifying the RI SLDS.

- This legislation formalizes governance structures, ensuring trust and transparency among stakeholders, and eliminates duplicative shadow data systems, providing a better return on state investment.

- Once codified, the RI SLDS can receive sustainable, predictable funding to support participating state agencies.

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Learn More

U.S. Department of Education, Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/

U.S. Department of Labor, Workforce Data Quality Initiative, https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/wdqi/grants

DataSpark, https://datasparkri.org/

DataSpark & RI SLDS
Prospectus, https://datasparkri.org/about-the-ri-slds

RI Talent Dashboard, http://ritalentdashboard.org/

Scott Gausland, Director, Office of Data and Technology Services, RIDE
Scott.Gausland@ride.ri.gov

Peg Votta, SLDS Program Manager, RIDE
Margaret.Votta@ride.ri.gov

Tammy Warner, Assistant Commissioner of Postsecondary Academic and Student Affairs, OPC
Tammy.Warner@riopc.edu

Andrea Spargo, Research Specialist, OPC
Andrea.Spargo@riopc.edu

Dana Brandt, Director (Interim), DataSpark
dbrandt@uri.edu